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Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the seventieth session

Observer status for the International Conference of Asian Political Parties in the General Assembly

Letter dated 11 August 2015 from the representatives of Australia, Cambodia, Japan, Nepal, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We, the undersigned, have the honour to request, in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the seventieth session of the General Assembly a supplementary item entitled "Observer status for the International Conference of Asian Political Parties in the General Assembly".

The International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) was launched in Manila, the Philippines, in September 2000 to build bridges of political cooperation and to establish networks of mutual benefit among mainstream political parties in Asia, both ruling and in opposition. Over its first decade, ICAPP has grown steadily in both membership and influence. As of June 2015, ICAPP's membership has reached more than 360 eligible political parties in 52 States and 1 territory in Asia. After establishing fraternal linkages and cooperation with the Permanent Conference of Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPPAL) in 2008, ICAPP has also been undertaking efforts to reach out to the political parties in other continents, and successfully helped political parties in Africa establish the Council of African Political Parties (CAPP) in 2013.

So far, ICAPP has held eight General Assemblies: in Manila (2000), Bangkok (2002), Beijing (2004), Seoul (2006), Astana (2009), Phnom Penh (2010), Baku (2012) and Colombo (2014). These Assemblies have brought together the Asian continent's most prominent political leaders to search for ways of coexisting in a more peaceful, more democratic and more prosperous Asia. Its Standing Committee, made up of 35 leading political parties in 23 States, has met at least twice a year since 2004.

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ICAPP has also organized special conferences on key continental issues since 2008, such as those of minimizing political corruption (Seoul, 2008), strengthening state capacity (Kathmandu, 2009), easing mass poverty (Kunming, 2010), dealing with natural disasters (Kuala Lumpur, 2011), enhancing people's access to benefits of development (Nanning, 2011), promoting green development (Xi'an, 2013), promoting women's leadership (Seoul, 2013) and promoting regional economic cooperation (Vladivostok, 2015).

From its inception, ICAPP has been a staunch supporter of the United Nations and its activities. The first paragraph of the preamble of the ICAPP Charter, adopted in September 2006, declares the unequivocal commitment of ICAPP to the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. Representatives of the political parties that took part in the 6th General Assembly of ICAPP, in Phnom Penh in 2010, unanimously adopted a declaration endorsing the bid for observer status for ICAPP in the United Nations General Assembly. ICAPP is also coordinating with the Governments of other United Nations Member States in joint initiatives towards the same objective.

We believe that ICAPP can play a major role in forging cooperation between the United Nations and the political parties of Asia and those of Latin America and Africa in the future, the three continents of the emerging democracies, by aggregating and channelling to the United Nations system the views of the peoples in all their diversity, as expressed in political debates and discussions at all dimensions, local, national and continental, promoting people's awareness, approval and support of international agreements reached at the United Nations, and building international consensus on United Nations action to meet key global challenges. In addition, ICAPP can provide support for political parties in the emerging democracies and increase their capacity to carry out at local and national levels their law-making and oversight functions on matters subject to international cooperation at the United Nations.

Attached are a draft explanatory memorandum (annex I) and a draft resolution regarding inviting ICAPP to participate in the sessions and work of the United Nations General Assembly (annex II).

We have the honour to request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Caitlin **Wilson**
Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia
to the United Nations
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

(*Signed*) Tuy **Ry**
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Cambodia
to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Yoshifumi **Okamura**
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(*Signed*) Durga Prasad **Bhattarai**
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(*Signed*) Lourdes O. **Yparraguirre**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines
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(*Signed*) Oh **Joon**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea
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(*Signed*) Rohan **Perera**
Permanent Representative of the
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Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

Historical background

The International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) was launched by the leaders of 46 political parties of Asia in Manila in September 2000, to build bridges of political cooperation and to establish networks of mutual benefit among mainstream political parties in Asia, both ruling and in opposition. Since its inception, ICAPP has grown steadily in both membership and influence. As of the end of June 2015, the membership of ICAPP has reached more than 360 eligible political parties in 52 States and 1 territory in Asia.

So far, eight General Assemblies of ICAPP have been successfully held: in Manila in 2000, Bangkok in 2002, Beijing in 2004, Seoul in 2006, Astana in 2009, Phnom Penh in 2010, Baku in 2012 and Colombo in 2014, and they have brought together political leaders in the region to exchange opinions and communicate with each other and have helped strengthen unity among Asian States and propel Asia along the road towards stability and prosperity. The 9th ICAPP General Assembly will be held in Kuala Lumpur in September 2016.

The ICAPP Standing Committee, made up of 35 leading political parties in 23 States, has met at least twice a year since 2004. ICAPP has also been annually organizing special conferences on key continental issues since May 2008, such as those of minimizing political corruption (Seoul, 2008), strengthening state capacity (Kathmandu, 2009), easing mass poverty (Kunming, 2010), dealing with natural disasters (Kuala Lumpur, 2011), enhancing people's access to benefits of development (Nanning, 2011), promoting green development (Xi'an, 2013), promoting women's leadership (Seoul, 2013) and promoting regional economic cooperation (Vladivostok, 2015). Another special conference, on rebuilding the Silk Road, will be held in Beijing in October 2015.

Purpose

Article 1 of the ICAPP Charter, adopted at the 4th General Assembly, in September 2006, stipulates the objectives of ICAPP as follows:

(a) To promote exchanges and cooperation between political parties with various ideologies in Asia;

(b) To enhance mutual understanding and trust among the peoples and countries in the region;

(c) To promote regional cooperation through the unique role and channel of political parties; and

(d) To create an environment for sustained peace and shared prosperity in the region.

Organizational structure

Membership

Article 2 of the ICAPP Charter stipulates that the ICAPP "shall be open to all political parties in Asia with democratically elected members in the parliaments of their respective countries, which are Member States of the United Nations". It was agreed to extend an invitation to political parties in the Palestinian National Authority in an effort to render ICAPP activities more inclusive and representative of the diversities existing in the region, at the 5th Meeting of the Standing Committee, in June 2006.

At the 8th Meeting of the Standing Committee, in November 2008, it was further agreed to apply two criteria to political parties in Asia to be eligible for invitation to future ICAPP activities: (1) political parties which have more than 1 per cent of elected seats in their parliaments, or (2) political parties which have won more than 1 per cent of popular votes in their latest parliamentary elections, as certified and recognized by their national election commissions.

According to these criteria, there are more than 360 political parties in 52 States and 1 territory in Asia that are eligible to participate in ICAPP activities as of the end of June 2015.

General Assembly

According to Article 4 of the ICAPP Charter, a General Assembly is held once every two years on a rotational basis among its members, unless otherwise decided by the Standing Committee. And, in principle, the Assembly is held for three working days during the latter half of the year and is composed of an opening session, a plenary session and thematic committee meetings, special workshops on specific topics as approved by the Standing Committee and a closing session.

Standing Committee

According to Articles 9 and 10 of the ICAPP Charter, a Standing Committee, composed of the representatives of principal political parties of 23 countries in Asia, was established. The membership may be shared by up to two principal political parties from each country. Currently, the Standing Committee is composed of the representatives of the 35 leading political parties from 23 States representing different subregions of Asia, i.e. Central Asia, Northeast Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia and Oceania.

The Members of the Standing Committee serve for two years from the end of a General Assembly until the end of the following General Assembly. The Standing Committee makes decisions and lays out the procedures on issues regarding the organization of ICAPP meetings, including the General Assemblies and special conferences, as well as other issues regarding other ICAPP activities and programmes.

Since 2004, the Standing Committee has been meeting more than twice a year.

Secretariat

The Permanent Secretariat of ICAPP was established in Seoul, Republic of Korea, by a decision unanimously taken at the 10th Meeting of the Standing

Committee, in March 2009, and endorsed at the 5th General Assembly, in September 2009.

In accordance with Article 12 of the ICAPP Charter, the Secretariat executes such functions, among others, as (1) to maintain and update the list of political parties and the official website, (2) to provide necessary information and assistance to ICAPP members, and (3) to establish contacts and promote cooperation with other international or regional organizations.

Financing

Article 8 of the ICAPP Charter stipulates that the political parties hosting the General Assembly, shall bear the primary expenses of the General Assemblies. The primary expenses include logistical arrangements for the General Assembly, i.e. conference facilities, domestic transportation, etc. The primary expenses shall not include, inter alia, international transportation to and from the location of the General Assembly. For the purposes of holding the General Assembly, the political parties hosting the General Assemblies, may seek voluntary contributions from members of ICAPP and other organizations.

ICAPP activities, i.e. General Assemblies, Standing Committee Meetings and Special Conferences, are funded in principle by the political parties that host such events, which usually cover the costs of organizing conferences and minimum local accommodation for a limited number of representatives of political parties participating in the events.

At the 10th Meeting of the Standing Committee, in March 2009, it was agreed that the budget and personnel to implement the functions of the ICAPP Secretariat shall be initially provided by the host country. It was further agreed that the Standing Committee will continue to discuss issues relating to budget and personnel of the Secretariat. Since 2010, the Korea Foundation in Seoul has provided funding to support a part of the Secretariat activities. Other administrative budget items, including office maintenance and personnel costs, are covered by private donations.

Activities

General Assemblies

So far, eight ICAPP General Assemblies (GA) have been held. The 1st GA was held in Manila in September 2000 with representatives of 46 political parties from 26 countries, the 2nd GA in Bangkok in November 2002 with 77 parties from 35 countries, the 3rd GA in Beijing in September 2004 with 81 parties from 35 countries, the 4th GA in Seoul in September 2006 with 92 parties from 36 countries, the 5th GA in Astana in September 2009 with 63 parties from 33 countries, the 6th GA in Phnom Penh in December 2010 with 90 parties from 36 countries, the 7th GA in Baku in November 2012 with 60 parties from 30 countries, and the 8th GA in Colombo in September 2014 with 64 parties from 29 countries.

These Assemblies have brought together the Asian continent's most prominent political leaders to search for ways of coexisting in a more peaceful, more democratic and more prosperous Asia.

The 9th General Assembly is scheduled to be held in Kuala Lumpur in September 2016.

Special conferences

Special conferences and workshops have also been convened for ICAPP members on key challenges we are facing in the region, such as minimizing political corruption (Seoul, 2008), strengthening state capacity (Kathmandu, 2009), easing mass poverty (Kunming, 2010), dealing with natural disasters (Kuala Lumpur, 2011), enhancing people's access to benefits of development (Nanning, 2011), promoting green development (Xi'an, 2013), promoting women's leadership (Seoul, 2013) and promoting regional economic cooperation (Vladivostok, 2015).

In addition, two separate workshops on human trafficking have been held in Kathmandu in January 2014 and in Phnom Penh in April 2015.

ICAPP is preparing to host another special conference, on rebuilding the Silk Road and connecting the East and West, in Beijing in October 2015.

Relations with other organizations

Recently, ICAPP has been trying to reach out to other regions in the world. The first joint session was successfully held in Buenos Aires in July 2009 with COPPPAL, the Permanent Conference of Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean. And, after establishing fraternal linkages and cooperation with COPPPAL, ICAPP has been undertaking efforts to reach out to the political parties in Africa, and successfully helped political parties in Africa establish the Council of African Political Parties (CAPP) in April 2013. In this regard, ICAPP is planning to convene the first trilateral meeting of representatives of ICAPP, COPPPAL and CAPP in Jakarta in April 2016.

In addition, the ICAPP Standing Committee has recently decided to establish regular dialogue with various groups of political parties in Europe.

ICAPP will continue to play a key role not only in Asia's inevitable movement to build an Asian community, but also in the global quest for a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Issues relating to the character of ICAPP

Although ICAPP is not an intergovernmental organization per se, the following points with regard to its legal status should be well taken into consideration by the United Nations Member States:

(a) **ICAPP is unique in nature in that it is open to all political parties regardless of their political orientation**;

(b) **The political parties participating in ICAPP activities are either responsible for forming the governments in their respective countries and making the most of their policies**, or eligible to form future governments depending on the results of elections;

(c) **ICAPP has also been channelling to the United Nations system the results of their political debates at all levels, local, national and continental**, like submitting the Kunming Declaration on Poverty Alleviation, which had been

adopted at the special ICAPP conference in Kunming in July 2010, in time for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals summit held two months later;

(d) In addition, in recent years, **ICAPP has been in close cooperation with political parties in other regions, i.e. Latin America and Africa, with a view to form a global forum of political parties,** and, in the case of Latin America, ICAPP and COPPPAL have been holding annual joint sessions to coordinate their activities to promote United Nations objectives.

Intergovernmental memorandum of understanding on cooperation to support ICAPP activities

In recognition of ICAPP's role in bringing together all political parties to promote understanding and friendship among countries not only in Asia but also in Latin America and Africa, Governments of several countries in the region concluded an intergovernmental memorandum of understanding (MOU) to provide support for the activities of ICAPP in July 2013. So far, the Governments of Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Vietnam have signed the MOU.

Now, many more Governments, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Turkey, are in the process of completing their domestic procedures to sign the MOU.

Reasons for seeking observer status for ICAPP

From its inception, ICAPP has been a staunch supporter of the United Nations and its activities. The first paragraph of the preamble of the ICAPP Charter, adopted in September 2006, declares ICAPP's unequivocal commitment to the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. Representatives of the political parties that took part in ICAPP's 6th General Assembly, in Phnom Penh in December 2010, unanimously adopted a declaration that endorsed ICAPP's bid for observer status in the United Nations General Assembly.

ICAPP will play a key and continuing role not only in Asia's inevitable movement to build an Asian community, but also in the global quest for a more peaceful and prosperous world.

ICAPP can also play a major role in forging cooperation between the United Nations and the political parties not only of Asia but also of Latin America and Africa, the three continents of the emerging democracies, in the following areas:

(a) Aggregating and channelling to the United Nations system the views of our peoples in all their diversity, as expressed in political debates and discussions at all dimensions, local, national and continental;

(b) Promoting ordinary people's awareness, approval and support of international agreements reached at the United Nations and through United Nations programmes;

(c) Building international consensus on United Nations action to meet key global challenges; and

(d) Providing support for political parties in the emerging democracies, to increase their capacity to carry out at local and national levels their law-making and

oversight functions on matters subject to international cooperation at the United Nations.

In addition, the United Nations Secretary-General has been sending his video messages to all major programmes of ICAPP, including the opening sessions of the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th General Assemblies of ICAPP, held in Astana, Phnom Penh, Baku and Colombo, and the ICAPP Special Conference on Poverty Alleviation, held in Kunming, and provided valuable contributions and guidance to the deliberations on the main themes of the conferences.

More detailed information on ICAPP can be found on its website at www.theicapp.org.

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Officers of the organization

Mr. Jose de Venecia, Jr., Founding Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Standing Committee of ICAPP, and Former Speaker of the House of Representatives and Co-Founder of the LAKAS-CMD Party, Philippines

Mr. Chung Eui-yong, Co-Chairman of the Standing Committee and Secretary General of ICAPP, and Former Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Democratic Party, Republic of Korea

Mr. Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Special Rapporteur of the Standing Committee of ICAPP, and Secretary General of Pakistan Muslim League-Q, Pakistan

Other members of the ICAPP Standing Committee

Mr. Shane L. Stone, Former Federal President of the Liberal Party, Australia

Mr. Ahamdov Ali Javad, Deputy Chairman and Executive Secretary of the New Azerbaijan Party, Azerbaijan

Mr. Salah Ali Abdulrahman, Chairman of the Advisory Body of the Islamic National Menbar Society, Bahrain

Mr. Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister and Member of the Standing Committee of the Cambodian People's Party, Cambodia

Mr. Ai Ping, Vice Minister of the International Department, Central Committee of the Communist Party, China

Mr. Karan Singh, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Indian National Congress, India

Mr. Hossein Kashefi Vahdati, President of Iran Parties House, Iran

Mr. Theo L. Sambuaga, Vice President of the GOLKAR Party, Indonesia

Ms. Chinami Nishimura, Member of the Diet and Director General of the Democratic Party, Japan

Mr. Nurlan Nigmatulin, First Deputy Chairman of "Nur Otan" People's Democratic Party, Kazakhstan

Mr. Hwang hin-ha, Member of the National Assembly and Vice Chairman of the Policy Committee of the Grand National Party, Republic of Korea

Mr. Dato Seri Shahidan bin Kassim, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister for the Northern Region Economic Growth, United Malays National Organization, Malaysia

Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Head of the International Department of the Communist Party of Nepal (UML), Nepal

Mr. Konstantin Kosachev, Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the State Duma and Deputy Secretary for International Policy and Interparty Relations of the Presidium of the General Council of the United Russia Party, Russia

Mr. Abdulkadir Emin Onen, Member of the Parliament and Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Justice and Development Party, Turkey

Mr. Vuong Thua Phong, Vice Chairman of the Commission for External Relations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Viet Nam

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the International Conference of Asian Political Parties

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the International Conference of Asian Political Parties,

1. *Decides* to invite the International Conference of Asian Political Parties to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.